

WASHINGTON. D.C. – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) and Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs Susan Collins (R-Maine) sent letters today to Department of Homeland Security Secretary (DHS) Janet Napolitano and DHS Inspector General Richard Skinner calling for an “immediate investigation of the DHS’s grants, contracts, entitlements and other forms of assistance to ACORN and its affiliate.” The letters stem from a \$997,402 Assistance to Firefighters Grant ACORN received from DHS that has been halted due to concerns raised by lawmakers in both the House and Senate.

“We are perplexed as to how this organization would even be considered for a first responder grant,” Representative Issa and Senator Collins wrote. “We ask that you investigate why ACORN, which has no apparent homeland security mission, received funds from your Department. Additionally, we ask that you determine why ACORN, which does not prepare its staff in emergency management, received first responder grants that are more appropriately given to “a first responder organization.”

This is not the first time the DHS has given money to ACORN. In the 2007 fiscal year, ACORN was awarded \$450,484 under DHS’ Fire Prevention and Safety grant program. The grant was provided to ACORN Institute, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation, which is a research and training facility used “to combat the poverty, discrimination and community deterioration that keeps low-income people from taking advantage of their rights and opportunities.”

“It is disturbing that ACORN was awarded a grant when fire departments all over the country

are struggling to make ends meet and get the equipment and training they need to protect their local communities,” Issa and Collins wrote. “A grant of nearly \$1 million in Homeland Security funding was awarded to ACORN, money that might have been awarded to fire departments.”

The Senate voted September 14 to cut off funding for ACORN. The House voted to defund ACORN just three days later. The Internal Revenue Service has ejected ACORN from the agency's volunteer tax assistance program and the Census Bureau has barred the group from assisting with the 2010 census. Last month, Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Lamar Smith (R-TX) sent letters to Justice Department Inspector General Glenn Fine and FBI Director Robert Mueller calling for investigations into ACORN's use of federal funds and possible criminal violations. Inspector General Fine has opened an investigation.

Among the details Issa and Collins asked Secretary Napolitano to provide were a comprehensive listing of all grants provided by DHS to ACORN and its affiliates, an explanation about the criteria DHS considered for rendering such a grant, any grant awarded from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and DHS's oversight plan to ensure grants awarded are spent in a manner consistent with the legislation.

[Click here to view the letter sent to DHS Secretary Napolitano.](#)

[Click here to view the letter sent to DHS IG Skinner.](#)

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